

Consumers Doubt Brands' Social Motives

Contributed by Warc
Monday, 11 June 2012
Last Updated Monday, 11 June 2012

Over two-thirds of US consumers believe companies use social networks to better advertise their products and boost profits, rather than to genuinely engage customers.

Allstate, the insurer, partnered with the National Journal, the current affairs title, and FTI Consulting, the advisory group, to survey 1,000 shoppers, some 66% of which used social media.

Across the entire panel, 69% of adults thought firms leveraged platforms like Facebook to "more easily advertise their products" and "increase their profits", growing to 73% among members of such services.

By contrast, just 22% of contributors stated that the main motivation here was to "more easily interact with current and potential customers", falling to 20% among active users of these properties.

At the general level, 42% of participants trusted the information provided by corporations "somewhat" or a "great deal", whereas 55% held "not very much" or no confidence in their communications.

Elsewhere, only 31% of interviewees saw big companies as open and transparent, while 39% perceived them as consistent and dependable, and 43% agreed they were accessible and responsive.

Another 60% of those polled said social media, and the web as a whole, made them more "well-informed", as it was easier to research products and companies and discuss them with other consumers.

For 59% of people registered on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, firms using these platforms seemed more accessible and responsive, and 49% agreed they appeared to be more transparent.

When discussing purchase habits, 72% of people had consulted friends, family and colleagues about what to buy, rising to 79% for the social networking audience.

A 58% majority had changed their mind about which product to choose based on the feedback resulting from this process, again growing to 64% for members of social platforms.

However, public television and radio were the media channels enjoying the strongest reputation in terms of trust, with 75% of the sample taking a positive view, just ahead of newspapers on 71%.

Cable news scored 70%, ahead of its network equivalent on 64%, while magazines logged 57%, and company websites hit 51%. Ads also registered 37%, with blogs on 34% and social media on 31%.

Data sourced from National Journal; additional content by Warc staff, 11 June 2012

About Warc
For more information please visit <http://www.warc.com/>

New York - 11 June 2012